

BUG NEWS

ATARI BOISE USERS GROUP
AN INDEPENDENT ATARI USERS GROUP

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DECEMBER MEETING TO BE HELD AT EAST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BUG President Alan Palsulich has found a new meeting place for the Atari Boise Users Group. Working with the folks from the school system's Community Education program, he was able to schedule a room at East Junior High School at 415 Warm Springs Avenue in Boise. According to Alan, the room at East Junior High is quite an improvement over the gym at Campus School, with a stage and much better acoustics. To avoid having to park on Warm Springs, turn off Broadway onto Redwood Court (a block south of Warm Springs--see map elsewhere in this issue) and park in the parking lot on the west end of the building. If you are from out of town, take the Broadway exit off I-84, go past Boise State University and about a quarter of a mile after you cross the Boise River, look for Redwood Court on your right. Use the west entrance to East Junior High and follow the signs.

The December meeting, which has kind of been up in the air, will be held on December 7th at 6:30 p.m. in our new home. In January we will continue with our regular meeting schedule (the first Monday of every month) and will resume the practice of handing out BUG NEWS at the meeting, unless you have made arrangements to have it mailed to you.

See you December 4th.

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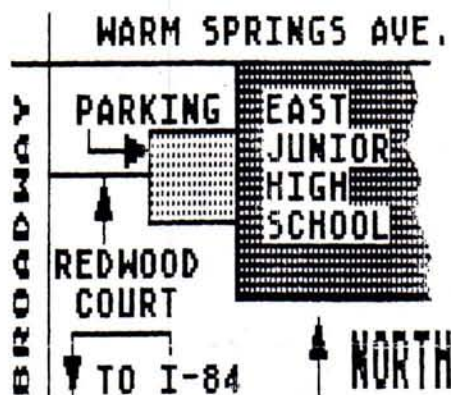
ADULT SIGS ON BUG BBS TO BE SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION AND VOTE AT MEETING

The Adult SIGs on the BUG BBS will be discussed and voted on by the membership at the December meeting, according to Alan Palsulich, BUG President. The SIGs, which contain digitized pictures of Playboy and Penthouse magazine centerfolds, have been a controversial subject of discussion for some time now. (See last month's BUG NEWS for opinions, pro and con.)

All members will find a ballot enclosed. THIS IS THE ONLY BALLOT YOU WILL RECEIVE. We strongly encourage you to attend the December meeting, join the discussion, and cast your ballot at that time. If you cannot make it to the December meeting, mark your ballot and mail it to Alan Palsulich, 2330 Ridgeview Way, Boise, Idaho 83702; we'll count any comments you may have regarding this issue and enclose them with your ballot. All ballots will be tabulated at the meeting and the results announced.

This is your club, your newsletter, and your BBS. They will only be what you want them to be. Your input is vital.

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MIDI JAM SESSION "JAMS" MEETING AT KARCHER MALL

Was the November BUG meeting something else, or what??? The MIDI demonstration showed Atari computing at its best. Organized by BUG President Alan Palsulich, the "MIDI meeting" may well have attracted the biggest crowd we've ever had at a single meeting--somewhere in the neighborhood of 125 to 150 Atari and/or music lovers from all over Treasure Valley "jammed" (pun intentional) the Community Room at Karcher Mall. Many members from Boise made the trek to Nampa, and everyone I talked to agreed that it was well worth the drive. I know very little about music, but if you weren't there, here is what you missed, as near as I could tell:

Joe Heitzberg, a fourteen-year-old student from North Junior High in Boise, started things off by playing several of his own compositions and answering questions from the audience. He had a lot of toes tapping at Karcher Mall before he was done. Roll over, Beethoven, and make room for Joe!

Pete Iverson, accompanied by Steve Johnson on guitar, showed what an ST-based MIDI system sounds like in the hands of an experienced musician. The Atari is just a game machine, huh? Incidentally, Pete is just joining the club. Welcome aboard, Pete, and thanks for the terrific demo!

For a finale, Marion Sunwall of Lundstrom Music in Karcher Mall showed some of the MIDI-compatible hardware on the market, and gave a brief demonstration geared for those who, like me--I don't know a synthesizer from a shoehorn--are unfamiliar with high-tech music and the jargon associated with it. Also, I understand that Lundstrom Music helped make it possible for BUG to use the Karcher Mall facilities for our November meeting. Keep them in mind when you start shopping for your MIDI system components.

In addition to the folks mentioned above, Alan Palsulich deserves a big "Thank You" for putting together the MIDI demonstration. He had a lot of behind-the-scenes help, so hats off also to the following: Ken Frink, Gary Marston, David Palsulich, Daryl Palsulich, and Nick Brizzi.

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let you SHRINK individual files by name, and there is a SHRINK XE version that uses that extra RAM to take fewer passes while running the program. I like this one in that it lets you see on the screen the data as it is read (I hate not being told what is going on!). You can use any drive for source or destination, and you can quit to DOS when finished. No RAMdisk with v.5 or XE versions.

DISKMASHER is not much different than the others. It opens with a rainbow screen, and you can mash, unmash, or exit to DOS. You can choose any destination drive, but the source MUST be D1:, RAMdisk is OK.

SCOPY from within SPARTADOS is the fastest, but I was using ultraspeed skewing on the write. It was also about the hardest to use, and I ended up having to put SCOPY in the RAMdisk to copy from 1 to 2. It seems that prompts are only given on single drive operations. Read more about this one in your SpartaDOS manual.

DISK COMMUNICATOR is about my favorite of the "automatic" compactors (I'll explain when I get to ARC). It is a full featured, well designed program, with nice simple to use menus, AND it does pretty good at smashing those sectors wnn! The main interesting feature it has is that once it starts reading in the source disk, it stops after 153 sectors and asks you if you want one long file, or up to 5 153 sector files (each with the same name, but with a unique number in the file name. What good is that? Well, some terminal programs (we won't mention XE TERM by name) have trouble up/down loading lengthy files, and not only that, but what if your time limit on a BBS won't let you D/L a 713 sector file. No problem, just D/L 3 153s now and the other 2 later! This program is probably the easiest to use with the simple to follow menu selections for about everything including most DOS functions. It also supports sub-directories with SpartaDOS or MYDOS.

Now the one that got me started on this whole episode....ARC! When I mentioned automatic, I did so to exclude this program. It does not just read all the sectors on a disk and mash them together in a file, no, this one is much more clever. To start out with, you must open a file to ARC to (be sure to include the drive # in the filename), it automatically puts an .ARC extender on it. Now the program asks you for files that you want ARC into the XXXX.ARC file. This can be any number of files from 1 to what ever it takes to make a disk full error come up. ARC reads the individual file, analyzes it and then decides which of 3 (4 on the ST and MS-DOS) ways to store it. It can store it as is, pack it, or squeeze it (STs can also crunch). It displays the number of bytes it will store in for each of the types and then selects the smallest one. Generally if packing is the best, then squeezing would actually be bigger than the source file, and

vice-versa. This probably explains why some of the other compactors end up bigger than what they started with. Since you must name each file, I couldn't do one for the Print Shop Icons, but check out the savings of space for the AMS files! It was hard to time this program, since some of the time was spent typing in file names, and by the way NO WILDCARDS! But to show that it is not just me that is slow, it took 15 minutes and 31 seconds to automatically recreate the compacted ANALOG disk. Mr. Walden informs me that the ST version will get smaller yields than the 8-bit, but that both are intercompatible and compatible with MS-DOS .ARC files (for what that is worth!) Well, this is a bit wordier than I had intended, but it is difficult to "compress" 30 hours of study into a couple of paragraphs. I hope you can get some good use from this info.

CAVEAT: All of these compactors except ARC will compact previously deleted files! A deleted file isn't really deleted until it's overwritten. Its name is just erased from the directory. If you think you may have some "deleted" files on the disk you want to compact, copy the individual files to a freshly formatted disk before running the compacting program.

ANALOG PS ICONS AMS SONGS
642 SCTR 640 SCTR 683 SCTR

PROGRAM	# PASSES	TIME	SEC	TIME	SEC	TIME	SEC
SCRUNCH	1630	7:42	1512	4:54	1713	8:12	
74 SCTR	3	2	3				
BOOTLEGER	1656	6:07	1648	6:23	REFUSED		
94 SCTR	3	3	TO COPY				
SHRINK	1638	6:58	1516	4:46	1715	6:37	
32 SCTR	3	2	3				
DISKMASH	1665	5:03	1657	5:06	1742	5:31	
38 SCTR	3	3	4				
SPARTADOS	1652	1:57	1644	2:06	1726	2:01	
30 SCTR	4	4	4				
DISK COMM	1622	4:55	1453	3:09	1726	5:29	
146 SCTR	5	5	5				
ARC	1549	24:30	CANNOT	1398	19:30		
92 SCTR	N/A	USE	N/A				